

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:JMONTVILLE/HLK

APPROVED BY P - JOSEPH J. SISCO

EUR - LBLAINGEN

AF - JBLAKE

NEA - ALATHERTON

S/S-O: P. SHANKLE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 125555 TOSEC 020123

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SP, US, PFOR, PBOR, MO

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA

REF: RABAT 2536

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SISCO

1. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN BOB NEUMANN'S MESSAGE (REFTEL) IN WHICH HE ANALYSES SAHARAN SITUATION IN LIGHT OF SPAIN'S MAY 23 DECLARATION OF ITS READINESS TO "TRANSFER SOVEREIGNTY" OF SAHARA IN SHORTEST TIME POSSIBLE. BOTH EMBASSY RABAT AND MADRID SEE DECLARATION AS SIGN OF GOS DETERMINATION NOT TO BE CAUGHT IN COLONIAL WAR. EMBASSY RABAT SEES SAHARAN DISPUTE AS NOW BEING ESSENTIALLY BETWEEN MOROCCO WHICH WANTS TO ANNEX SAHARA AND ALGERIA WHICH SUPPORTS "SELF-DETERMINATION," IN EFFECT BLOCKING MOROCCO'S AMBITION. EMBASSY RABAT SEES POSSIBLE ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN HOSTILITIES IF SPAIN PULLS OUT OF SAHARA BEFORE ORDERLY "TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY" TO SOMEONE CAN BE ARRANGED. NEUMANN RECOMMENDS PRESIDENT RAISE SAHARA ISSUE IN MADRID IF GOS DOES NOT DO SO AND SUGGESTS SEVERAL

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QUESTIONS (PARA 12 OF REFTTEL) PRESIDENT MIGHT ASK ABOUT

SPANISH INTENTIONS.

2. I DO NOT AGREE WITH NEUMANN'S RECOMMENDATION THAT
PRESIDENT TAKE INITIATIVE TO RAISE THIS ISSUE WITH
SPANIARDS. IF SPANISH RAISE SAHARA QUESTION, I THINK WE

SHOULD SIMPLY REAFFIRM POLICY OF STRICT NEUTRALITY ON
SUBSTANCE OF SAHARA ISSUE AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE CON-
CERNED PARTIES TO USE PEACEFUL MEANS TO RESOLVE THE
DISPUTE. THIS IS ESSENTIALLY THE LINE RECOMMENDED IN
BRIEFING MATERIALS FOR MADRID STOP. ONLY POINT THAT
MIGHT BE ADDED IS THAT WE CAN SEE RISKS IN PRECIPITATE
ACTIONS TO CHANGE STATUS QUO IN SPANISH SAHARA WHICH
COULD STIMULATE PRECIPITATE REACTIONS BY OTHERS. I
AGREE WITH RABAT THAT SAHARA QUESTION APPEARS TO BE
EVOLVING INTO INTER-ARAB, I.E., MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN
DISPUTE, AND WE DO NOT WANT TO GET IN BETWEEN MOROCCANS
AND ALGERIANS ON THIS ONE ANY MORE THAN WE DO BETWEEN
MOROCCANS AND SPANISH. PERHAPS ARAB COUNTRIES, THROUGH
ARAB LEAGUE, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BE MOST LOGICAL FORUM
TO RESOLVE PROBLEM PEACEFULLY. I CONTINUE, HOWEVER,
TO SEE NO U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST TO BE SERVED BY
INVOLVING OURSELVES ACTIVELY BETWEEN THE PRINCIPALS TO
THIS DISPUTE, WHICH WOULD BE IMPLIED IF PRESIDENT
TOOK INITIATIVE, HOWEVER LOW KEY, TO RAISE ISSUE. INGERSOLL

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